

## Adoption of the Electronic Document Records Management System within the Public Sector in Namibia: Exploring the Challenges and Opportunities

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**Abstract:** The concept of records management aided by information and communication technologies (ICTs) has recently been embraced by many institutions across the globe. For example, organisations that have implemented the Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) are deemed to be better equipped to handle both internally and externally generated records. These organisations are said to operate at higher level in terms of efficiency and effectiveness than those that still rely on manual filing. However, despite the well documented benefits that come with the adoption of ICTs for records management, some departments within the public sector in Namibia, such as the Ministry of Home Affairs, Homeland and Security as well as the Office of the Prime Minister are still heavily reliant on manual filing of documents. It is against this background that this study explored factors hindering the adoption of EDRMS in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). The study adopted a qualitative research approach to collect, analyse, and interpret data. The data collecting instruments included open-ended questionnaires, face-to-face interviews and observation of the study respondents. Data was analysed using the Atlas.ti tool. The study found that insufficient training of staff on electronic records management, lack of user needs analysis and lack of user involvement before the introduction of the system all contributed to resistance of the EDRMS adoption in the OPM. The study recommends that the OPM must provide adequate training to its employees on electronic records management and on the EDRMS in particular. The OPM should also make provision for the adoption of a change management strategy plan in order to get user buy-in for the new electronic system to be embraced.

**Keywords:** Electronic documents records management system, Information and communication technologies, Office of the prime minister of Namibia, Records, Records management

### 1. Introduction and Background

Usually about the only time records management is discussed in an average institution is when some crisis has occurred. Either files cannot be found, records are lost or all of the filing cabinets are full and no more storage space is available. It is imperative, therefore, that organisations initiate actions to manage their records in a more effective and efficient manner (McInerney, & Koenig, 2011).

A record can be defined as the information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business (National Archives of Namibia, 2007). In this study, an electronic record will refer to the recorded information that is stored in a form which only a computer can read or process.

Records management on the other hand is "the application of management techniques to the creation, utilisation, maintenance, retention, preservation, and disposal of records undertaken to reduce costs and improve efficiency of recordkeeping" (McInerney, & Koenig, 2011). The entire program of an organisation can benefit by improving its control

of the records it creates and maintains, especially by using modern information and communication technologies (ICTs) (Nengomasha, 2009).

The concept of ICTs has no universal definition since the methods and applications involved are constantly in flux (Chisa, & Hoskins, 2016). The use of ICTs for information creation, management, and dissemination can offer great opportunities to organisations. For the purposes of this study, ICTs will be understood as “a wide range of services, applications and technologies, using various types of equipment and software, often running over telecommunications networks which enable users to access, store, transmit, and manipulate information” (European Commission, 2001, p. 3).

The Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) is a good example of how ICTs can be employed for the efficient management of electronic records (Mutimba, 2014). According to (Mutimba, 2014), successful implementation of the EDRMS is critical for many organisations because it enhances accuracy and productivity in the entire cycle of records management.

This study examines the ways in which EDRMS are understood to be beneficially impacting records management in the Office of the Prime Minister in Namibia. Factors hindering employees’ acceptance of the EDRMS are also discussed aided by insights from the literature. In conclusion, a number of key areas of concern are identified.

### **1.1 Context of the Study**

Electronic records usage has increased over the years across different sectors of human life and the government of Namibia issued a cabinet decision number 4th/10.03.07/005 in 2007 for the public service to implement an EDRMS government platform (National Archives of Namibia, 2007). The EDRMS was intended to act as a records repository of all public hard copy records. In other words, the EDRMS would be an exact replica of the existing paper based records, in electronic form. Despite this landmark effort and various official pronouncements praising the system, the government continues to operate with physical records, while storing a few scanned copies on the EDRMS platform (National Archives of Namibia, 2007). The EDRMS implementation was executed by the Office of the Prime Minister (hereafter the OPM), in consultation with the National Archives of Namibia (NA), under the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. A team of consultants from China provided technical oversight. The OPM is located in Windhoek city, Namibia.

The government of Namibia declared the year 2019 as a year of accountability, whilst promoting transparency across all the government institutions. It was envisaged that this goal would be achieved if proper record management practices are followed by transitioning to electronic record keeping enabled by the introduction of the EDRMS in the public service. So far, eleven (11) government ministries and departments have implemented EDRMS under the guidance of the OPM. However, despite the OPM being the custodian of the EDRMS initiative across the Namibian public sector, records management within the office is still conducted manually, in effect rendering the implemented EDRMS infrastructure redundant. This lack of system utilization by designated users runs across the spectrum, ranging from the top managers to the junior ranks.

In practice, the core users for the EDRMS ought to be record keepers; namely: archivists, records clerks, records managers, private secretaries and personal assistants. Yet, these officials have, generally, shown resistance or lack of willingness to fully embrace and adapt to this new technology. This has negatively impacted the OPM’s overall performance, resulting in slow service delivery or misfiling of critical records. Importantly, this has also raised some serious security concerns as original records have been known to get lost.

It is against this background that this study aimed to investigate factors that hinder public employees, especially within the OPM, from accepting and fully utilizing the EDRMS in order to reach its envisaged value which is to increase efficiency, effectiveness and public trust in the public service.

### **1.2 Research Problem**

Afzal (2012, p. 102) defines ‘information organisations’ as “organisations that engage in all or one of the activities involving acquisition, organisation, preservation, processing, recording, creation, assimilation, packaging, repackaging, presentation, dissemination, transfer, and access of information”. Libraries, archives, museums, publishing houses, music

companies, and news channels are all examples of information organisations. This study proposes that the OTP is also an information organisation.

On a weekly basis, the OTP creates and disseminates an enormous amount of records through various organised events and projects. To manage these activities, the OTP produces voluminous documents like newsletters, minutes, bulletins, and reports in print and increasingly in digital formats. The OTP is also a custodian of financial, legal and cultural records (National Archives of Namibia, 2007).

In order to preserve its records more efficiently and reach out to its wider audience, the OTP is now experimenting with the power of EDRMS in order to efficiently achieve that goal. In this regard, the literature offers ample evidence of the many ways in which various organisations are engaging with modern ICTs in order to their services (Hutchings, 2015; Campbell, 2010; Michels, 2010).

However, while the various uses of ICTs by various institutions have been examined, far less is known about how officials in the public sector, such as the OTP in Namibia, adopt, use and reject these tools for purposes of records management. The study draws conclusions regarding the use of RDRMS within the OTP and the challenges of integrating ICTs into the public sector.

### **1.3 Research Questions and Objectives**

This article seeks to answer this overarching question: How does the OTP adopt EDRMS for purposes of records management and what are the challenges encountered in integrating EDRMS into public records management practice?

Within that broad scope, special focus is on the following objectives:

- Examine how the EDRMS was adapted to enhance records management at the OTP.
- Assess the level of user training in the OPM in order to implement the EDRMS effectively.
- Determine whether there was user needs assessment for EDRMS before implementation of the project.
- Understand the level of awareness by OPM staff of the legislation and policies, which govern electronic records management in Namibia.
- Understand the level of user satisfaction with the system and assess whether there has been any resistance to the adoption of the EDRMS.
- Provide recommendations based on the findings of the study

## **2. Literature Review**

There is general consensus in the literature that in the absence of any records management system, there is bound to be disorder and inefficiency in an organisation (Okello-Obura 2012). Poorly kept records such as minutes, receipts, contracts and correspondence can create irreparable chaos in any business enterprise irrespective of size. Thus, setting up best practice for a records management system in an enterprise will save a lot of money and time when a disaster or problem arises (Okello-Obura 2012).

According to Mosweu, Bwalya and Mutshewa (2016), public sector organisations across the globe have increasingly adopted EDRMS solutions for the purposes of improving organisational records management practices and consequently comply with legislative and regulatory requirements.

Although the benefits of implementing the EDRMS have been widely documented, researchers have increasingly recorded limited success in EDRMS initiatives implemented by government agencies (Newgen 2015). Some of the benefits for the adoption of the EDRMS in an institution are as follows (Nguyen, Swatman, Fraunholz and Salzman 2009; 2014):

- Increased efficiency in records management operations
- Improved business processes
- Job satisfaction
- Alignment with organisation's business strategies
- Top management are satisfied with the system
- Saving on office storage space
- Quick sharing and dissemination of information amongst the users

- Reliable back up of information
- Enhances quick decision-making process since information can be retrieved faster regardless of the geographical location of the user.

## **2.1 User Acceptance of EDRMS**

According to Oktal, Alpu and Yazici (2016), providing in-service training to the internal users related to system usage would increase levels of system usage. To understand what skills records managers find most useful, Buchanan (2017) conducted a survey on the importance of several competencies.

The highest rated competency was consulting, taken to mean the advising of clients of the system (with 78.3 % rating as very important), followed by organization skills (73.9 %), adapting standards (69.2 %), data management (61 %) and creating standards (59.4 %).

Mosweu, Bwalya and Mutshewa, (2016) observe that the procurement and implementation of EDRMS in the public sector comes at a huge cost to taxpayers. Unfortunately, most of these systems remain white elephants due to reluctance by the anticipated users to adopt and use them in their information management endeavours.

In order to understand factors that impede EDRMS adoption, some studies have pointed to a variety of factors, such as computer illiteracy, negative attitude towards technology, inadequate ICT infrastructure, poor change management, lack of trust in the new system and low confidence levels of staff in using the system (Mosweu, Bwalya and Mutshewa 2016).

However, Mosweu, Bwalya and Mutshewa, (2016) explain that the key factors contributing to limited success are inadequate training and poorly designed user interfaces and controls. The importance of on-going system training and some training in record management is also highlighted in the literature (Gunnlaugsdottir, 2008; Nguyen, Swatman, Fraunholz & Salzman 2009). Just offering general seminars is not enough, according to these studies.

Thus, individual training on the job, follow-up courses and support are necessary in order to obtain a wide level of use. According to Gunnlaugsdottir (2008), training yield best results when the ICT department and the records managers in a given organisation participate in the system training and where some training in Records Management (RM) is offered to the general employees. Gunnlaugsdottir (2008) warns that EDRMS implementation in organizations frequently results in a failure primarily due to the following reasons:

- lack of management support;
- lack of general training in records management;
- lack of effective system training offered to employees.

Thus, government ministries, departments, and agencies need to ensure that the required skills and competencies are present to manage their electronic records. This requires both the creation and filling of appropriate staff positions. In addition, there should be adequate transfer of knowledge by systems providers (National Archives of Namibia, 2007).

Thus, given that in a fully electronic environment, new record management skills are required of end users as creators and users of records, there are significant training implications for the implementation of an enterprise-wide system. The success of implementing any system depends on knowledgeable and appropriately skilled records management specialists and ICT support staff working in close co-operation.

## **2.2 Legislation and Policy Framework on Electronic Records Management**

The most common and well-known electronic record standards currently in use are the the International Standards Organisation (ISO) 15489 and the MOREQ, a European oriented standards body (Adam, 2008). Oktal, Alpu and Yazici (2016) and Lipchak and Mc Donald (2003) note that developing effective laws and policies to guide information management, such as public records laws legislation, archival legislation, access and privacy policies, policies on usage of electronic systems and then inspecting them fairly is of vital importance in promoting system usage.

According to Okello-Obura, (2012), it is important for institutions to enforce compliance with laws and regulations regarding electronic records management systems. This is because various laws and regulations specify exactly which types of records may be retained for different periods of time. For instance, according to the Uganda Revenue Authority, records required to be maintained by any business enterprise or persons liable for tax should be retained for at least six years after the end of the period to which they relate (Okello - Obura, 2012).

Many enterprises globally have also made adjustments to their policies and procedures to adhere to ISO 15489 – the international records management standard. If for instance, an enterprise is involved in international trade, it should adhere to ISO 900 guidelines. These guidelines specify how product development procedures are documented and how records are maintained (Okello - Obura, 2012). Furthermore, Kemoni (2009) notes that legislation and policies for the management of information technologies and their products, including electronic records are critical to a successful implementation of electronic records management.

However, despite the existence of the International Records Management standard and the ISO 15489, there is a need for a standard that builds on these two standards, specifically one tailored to electronic records management (Mosweu, Bwalya & Mutshewa, 2016).

This means that managing electronic records using EDRMS entails re-interpreting records management principles in the realm of the electronic environment. The re-interpretation should be influenced by the environment in which electronic records management is to be pursued (Mosweru, Bwalya & Mutshemwa 2016).

The drafting of standards for ERDMS applications (such as those in Australia, UK, South Africa, the International Council of Archives (ICA) guidelines, etc.) go a long way to influencing the likelihood of success of EDRMS implementation. However, nuanced differences which stem from differences in context make EDRMS implementation a contested enterprise. Thus, the different standards developed need to be adapted to different contextual realities so as to be seamlessly customized to the local contextual characteristics (Mosweru, Bwalya & Mutshemwa 2016).

Managing records in compliance with legislation and policies is not an option but an obligation for public sector bodies in spite of the difficulties of managing records in electronic form. Thus, proper records management programmes should be anchored in appropriate legislative and policy frameworks which are necessary for providing guidance for the successful creation, processing, storage and preservation of records and archival materials (Mosweu, Kelvin Bwalya, & Athulang Mutshewa, 2016).

According to Adam (2008), citizens have a right to request almost any type of information from any organization within a specific time period. Adam (2008) further advises that organizations and individuals charged with implementing systems to retain information need to seek legal clarification from legal counsel in their respective countries before implementing such a system. Mutula and Mostert (2010) conclude by emphasizing that a policy and regulatory framework is a necessary precondition for enhanced digital inclusion in an information society.

### **2.3 Electronic Records legislation and Policy Framework in Namibia**

In light of the above issues, Nengomasha (2009) argues that there inadequate legal and regulatory framework in Namibia to facilitate EDRMS implementation. To begin with, Namibia does not have a freedom of information legislation (Nengomasha 2009) Thus, according to the National Archives of Namibia, there is need for the development of a comprehensive and integrated legislative and regulatory framework for managing information and not see these legal instruments as separate strands of activity (National Archives of Namibia 2007).

The National Archives of Namibia (2007) further highlights that the critical elements in this framework is the existence of legal and regulatory instruments that: i) recognize e-records as being legally admissible in the event of court proceedings ii) identify processes of determining the e-records' authenticity and/or reliability dimensions which may include, but are not limited to, electronic signatures, digital watermarks, encryption as well as trusted third parties such as certification authorities.

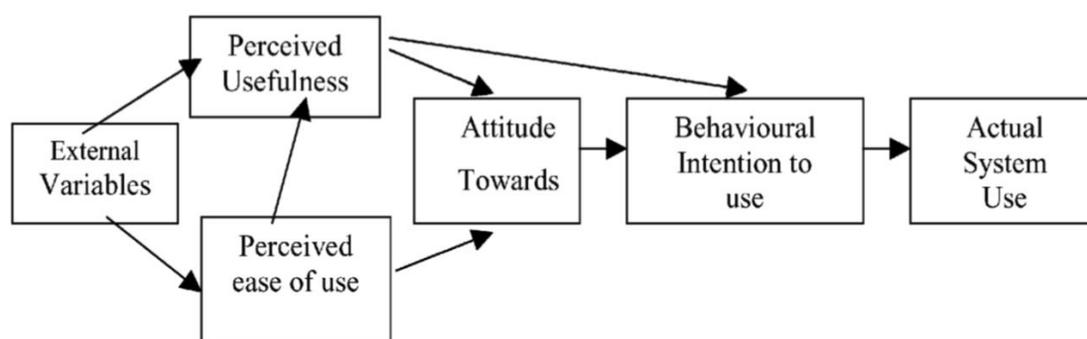
Since the government of Namibia has embarked on implementing eGovernment (Nengomasha, 2009), which will create

a lot of electronic records, it is important to implement effective laws and policies that highlight the importance of managing electronic records through established policies and regulations (Oktal, Alpu, & Yazici, 2016).

## 2.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is premised within the so called Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as demonstrated in figure 1 below (Legris, John and Colletette 2001). According to Barata (2001), information systems implementation is a costly exercise and has a relatively low success rate in the public sector. The TAM examines the mediating role of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness in the relation between systems characteristics (external variables) and the probability of system use (an indicator of system success) (Legris, John , & Colletette, 2001).

Legris, John and Colletette (2001) further explain that the key purpose of the TAM is to provide a basis for tracing the impact of external variables on internal institutional beliefs, attitudes, and intentions. The model suggests that perceived ease of use (PEOU), and perceived usefulness (PU) are the two most important factors in adopting system use.



**Figure 1:** The Technology Acceptance Model (Legris, John , & Colletette, 2001)

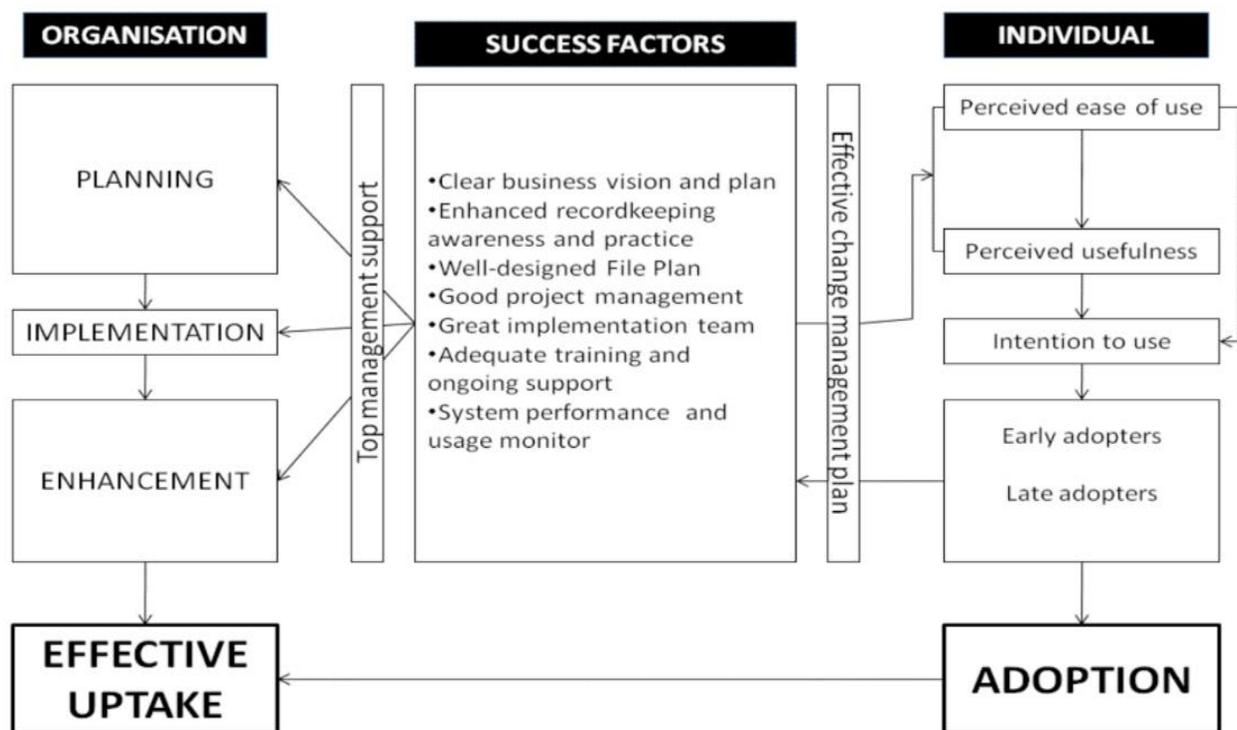
In terms of this theoretical framework, a potential user's overall attitude towards using a given system is a major determinant of whether the system is actually used or not. However, user attitude towards using a particular information system is, in turn, a function of two major beliefs: PEOU and PU (Davis (1985).

PEOU has a causal effect on PU. Design features of a system, for example, directly influence PU. Since design features fall into the category of external variables, they are not theorised to have any direct effect on attitude or behaviour, instead affecting these variables only indirectly through PU and PEU (Legris, John and Colletette 2001).

Legris, John and Colletette (2001) observe that the TAM has proven to be a useful theoretical model in helping to understand and explain user behaviour in information system implementation. Importantly, the TAM has been tested in many empirical studies and the tools used with the model have shown to yield statistically reliable results.

In the context of the present study, Nguyen, Swatman, Fraunholz and Salzman (2009), point out that the effective uptake of EDRMS implementation comprises of two important elements: the organisation and the individual. Effective uptake of EDRMS, therefore, occurs when the project implementation strategy in an organisation is built on widespread individual staff adoption of the new system. This is commonly known as 'Change Management' in the field of project implementation (Nguyen, Swatman, Fraunholz and Salzman 2009).

According to Legris, John and Colletette (2001), an EDRMS project will typically go through three phases: planning, implementation and enhancement. This phased process is aimed at providing guidance for the successful implementation and sustainability of the project. Moreover, 'top management support' is critical for any successful implementation while an effective change management plan is particularly important for a high rate of individual adoption as presented in EDRMS Adoption framework below.



**Figure 2:** Framework for Public Sector EDRMS Adoption (Nguyen, Swatman, Fraunholz, & Salzman, 2009)

Thus, the TAM model shows that system adoption is influenced by an individuals' intention to use the new EDRMS which, in turn, is affected by that system's PEU and PU. This means that, users perception at the OPM will be positively influenced if an effective change management plan exists, which must be supported by an effective communication strategy.

### 3. Methodology

The study was conducted in the OPM in Windhoek, Namibia. This location was found to be suitable for this study as this office is the custodian of the EDRMS initiative within the public sector in the country.

The research design was largely qualitative. Qualitative methods were useful in gaining true understanding of the social aspects of why the OPM employees seem not able to embrace the EDRMS system. Qualitative methods also provided a depth of understanding regarding issues that otherwise could not have been possible to unearth using quantitative research approach, which is a statistically based investigation.

Information gathering instruments included interviews, participant observation, and document collections. Both obtrusive and unobtrusive observation was employed in this study. Semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires were also used. This allowed the interviewer to probe for more perceptions and opinions about the factors hindering the employee acceptance of the EDRMS in the OPM.

The interview schedule included questions on personal data (name, address, age, marital status, and literacy level), questions on academic qualifications of the respondent and daily working schedule. Other questions included in the interview schedule asked for the availability and accessibility of EDRMS, as well as the usage and effectiveness of this technology. The interviews were conducted largely by using an audio tape recorder.

The OPM is a large public institution, hence it could have been impossible to ask all staff members to partake in this study given its limited scope. Thus, the study adopted the non-probability sampling method, commonly known as purposive sampling. According to (Saunders, Philip, & Adrian, 2009) non-probability sampling provides a range of alternative techniques to select samples based on one's subjective judgement. According to Greener (2008), sampling is a

practical way of studying people and their activities, thoughts, attitudes, abilities or relationships in relation to a specific subject matter.

In this study, the population included all the record keeping staff within the OPM. These included records clerks that work in registries, chief archivists, senior archivists and archivists, Acting Deputy Director for Applications and Archival support Division, Personal Assistants, ICT personnel, and all office secretaries. The total population, therefore, was 20 staff members.

Data was analysed using content and thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998). Content analysis was used to analyse written, verbal and communication messages that were received from the respondents. According to (Boyatzis, 1998) thematic analysis is a process for encoding qualitative information. Thematic analysis can be thought of as a bridge between the language of qualitative research and the language of quantitative research (Boyatzis, 1998). Thematic data analysis technique was used to analyse data that was collected through interviews and open-ended questionnaires.

## **4. Discussion and Key Findings**

The adoption of EDRMS in the OPM was examined from the perspective of the following broad categories:

### **4.1 Poor Adoption of the EDRMS in the Public Sector**

The study found that insufficient training of staff on the records management policy, inadequate training on change management, lack of user needs analysis and involvement before the introduction of the system; inadequate technical expertise; lack of an updated filing system are some of the key factors hindering adoption of the EDRMS in the public sector. These findings are supported by the findings of a study conducted by (Kwatsha, 2010), which found that user involvement in EDRMS projects is hindered by lack of top management support during the implementation of the system. What follows is a close examination of these challenges:

#### **4.2 Lack of User Training**

Training is very significant for effective implementation of the EDRMS initiative in the OPM. Pre- training assessment and post-training assessments that should prepare the employees for this major change is absent at the OPM and this has led to the resistance of employees to embrace the system. These findings are supported by Mutimba (2014) who notes that training should be conducted prior to the introduction of EDRMS in order to prepare users to adapt to the new environment of managing records.

According to Kwatsha (2010), effective training is key in getting the buy-in of the stakeholders at all levels. Once employees are given enough training, they will fully understand the system and how to interact with it. This will help them perform their work within the new environment. Kwatsha (2010) further observes that training is a necessary component and should include the training of system administrators, workflow administrators, system users and trainers amongst others.

The findings from this study revealed that staff in the OPM received inadequate training on several aspects of the new system such as the awareness on the existence of the electronic records management policy, training on use and how the EDRMS would add value. The study also revealed that the ICT personnel lack the necessary technical expertise to help them in implementing and maintaining the system. Some respondents highlighted the fact that some of the EDRMS training officers are not well equipped with presentation skills and therefore make it hard for staff to understand and enjoy the training. Refresher training should be done on quarterly basis to address this.

#### **4.3 Lack of User Involvement in the EDRMS Project**

The study also revealed that poor or lack of user involvement in the EDRMS project is another challenge for the effective adoption of the EDRMS. This finding is in line with the study conducted by Eichhorn (2014) which found that user involvement on functional requirements can positively impact project delivery, business functionality and technical functionality.

According to the findings from this study, user needs assessment was not done within the OPM before the implementation of the system. The respondents indicated that they were never involved or consulted in anyway during the implementation of the EDRMS and this has led to general resistance to embrace the new technology.

#### **4.4 Security Concerns of the EDRMS**

The study also revealed that most of the employees at the OPM do not consider the EDRMS initiative as being secure enough, mainly because it is designed and implemented by a Chinese firm. This perception that Chinese technology cannot be trusted, has brought in a lot of scepticism amongst users. Generally, employees found the system not to be “user friendly and too limiting” according to one respondent.

Other limitations, according to the respondents, include: system incompatibility with the internet Explorer and lack of compatibility with any other internet browsers such as Firefox, chrome, safari, and others and the need to use separate credentials each time the user logs into the system, other than using the same account details staff use to log into their individual computers. This causes confusion as users tend to forget their passwords in most cases which has contributed to alienation to the new system by OPM employees.

#### **4.5 Poor Filing System**

The findings from this study further revealed that the OPM does not have a working or up to date Filing Plan in place. This is a major challenge since documents need to be filed as per their appropriate referencing method in accordance to the file plan.

#### **4.6 Poor Change Management Principles**

According to (Mutimba, 2014), most records management projects fail in organizations due to resistance among employees. The so called ‘change management’ is an important step to be undertaken by the project team before the actual implementation of the project. Therefore, for a highly technical EDRMS infrastructure to be fully embraced and effectively utilized by its intended users, a mind shift needs to be made. Initially, this may require staff continuing to use the electronic filing parallel to the manual filing system.

The reality is that the OPM staff were used to filing manually and some felt that their workload was complicated by the introduction of the EDRMS technology. Some even felt that the EDRMS is not part of their job description, according to some respondents. This is a sign that management needs to champion this process and clearly stipulate how the OPM official information would be better managed with the assistance of the new technology. Thus, it is always important to implement a change management strategy for end-users to accept change and buy-in on the EDRMS programme.

Moving to a new system that people are not familiar with will inevitably generate concerns about how effective and reliable it will be (Mutimba, 2014). For example, a concern for some respondents was whether confidential or sensitive information fed into the system would be adequately protected. This uncertainty has partly contributed to the resistance of the new system.

#### **4.7 Lack of Awareness of the Regulatory Framework Guiding Electronic Records Management in Namibia.**

In order to achieve a successful electronic records management programme, Mutimba (2014) observes that an organisation needs to establish a sustainable records management infrastructure, which includes developing policies for the management of records and information in all forms, including electronic and hard copy.

However, the findings from this study show that employees at OPM are not aware of the existence of electronic records management policies at this office. Even though few indicated the existence of the National Archives of Namibia Act, they were still not aware of any electronic records management policy.

According to Mutimba (2014), any policy is as good as nothing if it is not known to the people intended for. Therefore, policy must be cascaded and made available to everyone since records management cuts across all the departments in OPM.

#### **4.8 Lack of Skills amongst the Record Keeping Staff in Managing Electronic Records.**

The study found that there is lack of skills at OPM amongst the record keeping staff in managing electronic records. This is in line with the findings of Mutimba (2014) who highlights training as very fundamental in ensuring success of records management projects.

Thus, organizations need to invest in training and building user capacity in managing the system. Some of the respondents indicated that they only received training at the initial implementation phase, and they are advocating for more vigorous refresher training sessions.

#### **4.9 Alignment of Institutional Culture and Technology**

Finally, this study revealed that the successful implementation of EDRMS requires the assurance that people's culture, process and technology are aligned. This can be done using the Information Management Book of Knowledge (IMBOK) (Kwatsha 2010). Kwatsha (2010) adds that without addressing the people's issues adequately, technical good projects are likely to fail.

### **5. Recommendations from the Study**

Based on the key findings discussed above, the study recommends the following: Training on electronic records management - Since the EDRMS project has already been implemented by the OPM, a refresher training plan needs to be developed. The immediate users of the system need to be trained adequately with a clear timeline of projected refresher workshops. After the immediate users are trained an alternative training plan also needs to be developed to cover the entire institution. User involvement and buy in - It was clear from respondents of the study that users were not actively involved from the start at the point of system implementation. User involvement is crucial because it enables user buy in.

At the OPM, this can be achieved by offering continuous training to users and giving them the platform to rate the system performance and functionality. Once the feedback is obtained, the OPM can fine-tune the system as per the users' recommendations and experience. This will give the users a feel of being valued and in turn take ownership of the system. Security of the EDRMS - Some respondents expressed concern about the security of the data or information they upload on the system. Through the training sessions, discussed above, users at the OPM can be informed about the security features that are in place on the EDRMS. This will assure them that the system is secure, giving them the peace of mind to perform their duties optimally.

Need to embrace change - It was clear from the respondents of the study that the mindset of some OPM staff members need to shift in the direction of electronic records management. Through awareness campaigns, either via refresher training or group (department/division) sessions, the OPM employees need to be made aware of the value that EDRMS add to their services. This can especially be achieved with the buy in of top management. Development and implementation of an electronic records management policy - For the purposes of electronic records management best practice, the top management at OPM should formulate and implement an electronic records management policy. Management should endorse this policy and cascade it downwards to middle management levels and further down to rank and file employees.

This will ensure that records created and filed on the EDRMS are accurate and relevant. Needless to say that any electronic record policy can only work if the top management support of it. Moreover, all the staff that are involved in the policy implementation should receive appropriate training. The OPM management can request for assistance from the National Archives on formulating an electronic records management policy.

User capacitation on the ERDMS - Customised training for users is also recommended. This will allow users to be trained on their familiar filing systems and organogram. Currently users from different departments and divisions of the OPM are all trained on the same system with the same information. Thus, some users are finding it hard to relate to the generic training. This partly explains why some users do not use the system at all when they go back to their stations.

Further research could be done on successful implementation strategies of the EDRMS in the public sector in Namibia, specifically examining the steps that need to be taken from the planning phase, implementation phase to the monitoring and evaluation phase.

## **6. Conclusion**

The study concludes that most records management projects fail due to resistance amongst staff members within an organisation. Change management is an integral aspect that must be undertaken by the project team before the actual take off of the project. This was not the case at the OPM. This was due to lack of awareness on the importance of records management and most specifically electronic records management.

Unless electronic system change is managed effectively, an organisation will not secure the requisite user acceptance and buy-in that is essential for a successful project implementation of this magnitude. It is necessary to have change management and effective channels of communication in place as part of the overall project implementation strategy.

The findings of this study revealed that not all employees were involved nor consulted in the initial phase of the EDRMS project. The study also showed that the lack of management buy-in has been the major contributing factor to the resistance and poor utilisation of the EDRMS in the Public Sector in Namibia.

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